E
E 449
.V242
Copy 2

THE CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE OF ABOLITIONISM.

NESBITT & CO., PRINTERS.

Class E449
Book .V242
Copy 2

The Character and Influence of Abolitionism.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BROOKLYN,

ON

Sabbath Evening, Dec. 9th, 1860,

BY

REV. HENRY J. VAN DYKE, PASTOR.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

NEW-YORK:
GEORGE F. NESBITT & CO., PRINTERS,
CORNER OF PEARL AND PINE STS.
1860.

Copy 2

NEW-YORK, *December* 11*th*, 1860.

To the Rev. HENRY J. VAN DYKE.

Rev. and Dear Sir:

Having heard your sermon, on Sabbath evening last, on the "CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE OF ABOLITIONISM," we feel convinced that a wider circulation of its sentiments is called for in a time like the present, and we request the favor of you to furnish us with a copy, that it may be published in pamphlet form, for the above purpose.

You have our lasting thanks, for the fearless stand you have taken upon the great question of the day; and for the noble defence of principles which are so applicable to the perpetuity of our former happy, but now distracted and threatened, country. We do not despair of the Union, if such sentiments shall rule in the hearts and govern the judgment of our countrymen.

With much esteem, yours, &c.,

JAS. T. SOUTTER,	WM. KUMBEL,
G. B. LAMAR,	WM. S. DUNHAM,
JOHN SCRYMSER,	R. H. LOWRY,
FRED'K LACEY,	JOHN LAIDLAW,
CHAS. M. FRY,	RALPH KING,
C. J. LEIGH,	J. C. WHITWELL,
JOHN H. MORRISON,	GEO. G. SAMPSON,
WM. T. COLEMAN,	B. F. BRITTAN,
JAS. R. LOTT,	GEO. L. SAMPSON,
G. C. WOODHULL,	WM. O. MASSIE,

HENRY SHELDON.

Gentlemen:

I submit the manuscript of my discourse to your disposal; and pray that God will make it instrumental in accomplishing all the good you anticipate from its publication. With many thanks for your expressions of personal regard,

I am, truly, your servant, for Christ's sake,

HENRY J. VAN DYKE.

To Messrs. SOUTTER, COLEMAN and others.

IN EXCHANGE

Cornell Univ.

SERMON.

1 TIMOTHY VI, 1–5.

1. Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

2. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved. partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

3. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

4. He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strife of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

5. Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

I propose to discuss the character and influence of Abolitionism. With this view, I have selected a text from the Bible, and purpose to adhere to the letter and spirit of its teaching. We acknowledge, in this place, but one standard of morals—but one authoritative and infallible rule of faith and practice; for we are Christians here; not blind devotees, to bow down to the dictation of any man or church; not heathen philosophers, to grope our way by the feeble glimmerings of the light of nature; not modern infidels, to appeal from the written law of God to the corrupt and fickle tribunal of reason and humanity; but Christians, on whose banner is inscribed this sublime challenge:—"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Let me direct your special attention to the language of our text. There is no dispute among commentators, there is no room for dispute, as to the meaning of the expression, "servants under the yoke." Even Mr Barnes, who is himself a distinguished Abolitionist, and has done more, perhaps, than any other man in this country to propagate Abolition doctrines, admits that "the addition of the phrase 'under the yoke,' shows undoubtedly that it (*i. e.*, the original word, *doulos*) is to be understood here of slavery."*

* Mr. Barnes adopts a most extraordinary method to avoid the force of the precept which commands slaves who have believing masters to "*do them service*, because *they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit.*" He says: "The passage before us only proves that Paul considered that a man who was a slaveholder *might* be converted,

Let me quote another testimony on this point from an eminent Scotch divine. I mean Dr. McKnight, whose Exposition of the Epistles is a standard work in Great Britain and in this country,

---

and be spoken of as a believer or a Christian. Many have been converted in similar circumstances, as many have been in the practice of *all other kinds of iniquity.* What was their duty *after* their conversion, was another question; and what was the duty of their servants or slaves, was another question still."

Again he says: "The passage does not teach that a man *can* be a Christian, and *continue* to hold others in bondage. It does not teach that he ought to be considered as maintaining a good standing in the church if he *continues* to be a slaveholder. The fact that a man might be converted who was a slaveholder, no more proves that it would be right and desirable that he should *continue* that relation, than the fact that Saul of Tarsus became a Christian when engaged in persecution proves that it would have been right for him to continue in that business, or than the conversion of the Ephesians, who used 'curious arts,' proved that it would have been proper for them to continue in that employment. Men who are doing wrong, are converted in order to turn them *from* that course of life, not to justify them *in* it." Now, in view of these extracts, I have three remarks to make. (1.) They illustrate the power of fanaticism to imbitter the heart. Mr. Barnes well knew when he wrote these passages, that multitudes of the noblest and holiest men of this land have been, and are, slaveholders—that many of the founders of our government, with Washington at their head, were slaveholders—that there are now in our Southern States thousands of Christian masters who give every Scriptural evidence of piety; and yet in a way that is all the more severe, because of its quiet and seemingly gentle manner, he teaches that slaveholding is a crime on a par with the imposture of the Ephesian sorcerers, with the slaughter of Saul the persecutor, a crime so obvious and enormous that a convert from heathenism, without any inspired instruction upon the subject, at once, and instinctively, abandoned it. (2.) These extracts illustrate most pitiably how fanaticism warps the human intellect. The inspired Apostle commands *that slaves who have believing masters* (not masters *who might become* believers, as Mr. Barnes, with an amazing ingenuity, intimates, but *believing masters*—masters who *had been* converted) *should do them service.* And why? BECAUSE they are "faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit." Because these masters had been converted, were beloved of God, were faithful in the discharge of their social duties, were partakers of the benefits of Divine grace—THEREFORE, their slaves were to be the more obedient and respectful in their deportment. Now does not any one see that such a precept *contemplates the continuance* of the relation between the Christian master and his slaves? Would Paul so stultify himself as to give commandments for the regulation of that relation, based upon the fact of the master's conversion, if he had expected and known this fact would instantly dissolve the relation itself? When he says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord," does he not imply that the parental relation is to be continued? And so when, in the very same passage, (Ephesians vi, 1–5,) he says, "Servants, (*douloi*, slaves,) be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh," does he not intimate, in the strongest form, that he expects *that* relation to continue?

(3.) These passages cast an imputation upon the integrity and candor of the great Apostle. I do not say Mr. Barnes *meant* such an imputation: I speak of the effect of such interpretations upon those who imbibe their spirit. Mr. B. puts slaveholding on a level with "all other kinds of iniquity," and indicates his estimate of its guilt by choosing persecution and sorcery to illustrate it. Very well, then; if this be true, Paul might treat "all other kinds of iniquity" in the same way. To be consistent, he should have said: "Sorcerers, use your curious arts and practice your impostures in a Christian way. Persecutors, when you hale men and women, and breathe out threatenings and slaughter against the Church, see to it that you strangle and beat and kill the saints in the most gentle and tender manner. Adulterers, give to your paramours that which is just. Adulteresses, be obedient and submissive to those whom you serve. Men who go down from Jerusalem to Jericho, do not despise the thieves among whom you fall, for they 'are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit.'" Who does not see the gross impiety of attributing such teaching to the great Apostle? But upon whom is this impiety chargeable? Let the text of this discourse answer the question. Let those who teach that Paul held back the truth in regard to an enormous crime, answer to their own conscience, and to the distracted country which they have embroiled in fraternal strife, by their unscriptural dogmas.

and whose associations must exempt him from all suspicion of pro-slavery prejudices. He introduces his exposition of this chapter with the following explanation:—"Because the law of Moses (Exodus xxi, 2) allowed no Israelite to be made a slave for life without his own consent, the Judaizing teachers, to allure slaves to their party, taught that under the gospel, likewise, involuntary slavery is unlawful. This doctrine the Apostle condemned here, as in his other Epistles, (1 Cor. vii, 20; Col. iii, 22; Eph. vi, 5,) by enjoining Christian slaves to honor and obey their masters, whether they were believers or unbelievers, and by assuring Timothy that if any person taught otherwise, he opposed the wholesome precepts of Jesus Christ, and the doctrine of the gospel, which in all points is conformable to godliness or sound morality, and was puffed up with pride, without possessing any true knowledge either of the Jewish or Christian revelation." Our learned Scotch friend then goes on to expound the passage in the following paraphrase, which we commend to the prayerful attention of all whom it may concern:—

"Let whatever Christian slaves are under the yoke of unbelievers pay their own masters all respect and obedience, that the character of God whom we worship may not be calumniated, and the doctrine of the gospel may not be evil spoken of, as tending to destroy the political rights of mankind. And those Christian slaves who have believing masters, let them not despise them, fancying that they are their equals because they are their brethren in Christ; for, though all Christians are equal as to religious privileges, slaves are inferior to their masters in station. Wherefore, let them serve their masters more diligently, because they who enjoy the benefit of their service are believers and beloved of God. These things teach, and exhort the brethren to practice them. If any one teach differently, by affirming that, under the gospel, slaves are not bound to serve their masters, but ought to be made free, and does not consent to the wholesome commandments which are our Lord Jesus Christ's, and to the doctrine of the gospel, which in all points is conformable to true morality, he is puffed up with pride, and knoweth nothing either of the Jewish or the Christian revelations, though he pretends to have great knowledge of both; but is distempered in his mind about idle questions and debates of words, which afford no foundation for such a doctrine, but are the source of envy, contention, evil-speaking, unjust suspicion that the truth is not sincerely maintained, keen disputings carried on contrary to conscience, by men wholly corrupted in their minds and destitute of the true doctrine of the gospel, who reckon whatever produces most money is the best religion. From all such impious teachers withdraw thyself, and do not dispute with them."

The text, as thus expounded by an American Abolitionist and a Scotch divine, (whose testimony need not be confirmed by quotations from all the other commentators,) is a prophecy written for these days, and wonderfully applicable to our present circumstances. It gives us a life-like picture of Abolitionism in its principles, its spirit and its practice, and furnishes us plain instruction in regard to our duty in the premises. Before entering upon the discussion of the doctrine, let us define the terms employed. By Abolitionism, we mean the principles and measures of Abolitionists. And what is an Abolitionist? He is one who believes that slaveholding is sin, and ought therefore to be abolished. This is the fundamental, the characteristic, the essential principle of Abolitionism—that slaveholding is sin—that holding men in involuntary servitude is an infringement upon the rights of man, a heinous crime in the sight of God. A man may believe, on political or commercial grounds, that slavery is an undesirable system, and that slave labor is not the most profitable; he may have various views as to the rights of slaveholders under the constitution of the country; he may think this or that law upon the statute books of Southern States is wrong; but this does not constitute him an Abolitionist; to be entitled to this name, he must believe *that slaveholding is morally wrong.* The alleged sinfulness of slaveholding, as it is the characteristic doctrine, so it is the strength of Abolitionism in all its ramified and various forms. It is by this doctrine that it lays hold upon the hearts and consciences of men, that it comes as a disturbing force into our ecclesiastical and civil institutions, and by exciting religious animosity, (which all history proves to be the strongest of human passions,) imparts a peculiar intensity to every contest into which it enters. And you will perceive it is just here that Abolitionism presents a proper subject for discussion in the pulpit: for it is one great purpose of the Bible, and therefore one great duty of God's ministers in its exposition, to show what is sin and what is not.

Those who hold the doctrine that slaveholding is sin, and ought therefore to be abolished, differ very much in the extent to which they reduce their theory to practice. In some this faith is almost without works. They content themselves with only voting in such a way as in their judgment will best promote the ultimate triumph of

their views. Others stand off at what they suppose a safe distance, as Shimei did when he stood on an opposite hill to curse King David, and rebuke the sin, and denounce Divine judgments upon the sinner. Others, more practical, if not more prudent, go into the very midst of the alleged wickedness, and teach "servants under the yoke" that they ought not to count their own masters worthy of all honor—that liberty is their inalienable right—which they should maintain, if necessary, even by the shedding of blood. Now, it is not for me to decide who, of all these, are the truest to their own principles. It is not for me to decide whether the man who preaches this doctrine in brave words, amid applauding multitudes in the city of Brooklyn, or the one who, in the stillness of the night, and in the face of the law's terrors, goes to practice the preaching at Harper's Ferry, is the most consistent Abolitionist, and the most heroic man. It is not for me to decide which is the most important part of a tree; and if the tree be poisonous, which is the most injurious, the root, or the branches, or the fruit. But I am here to-night, in God's name, and by his help, to show that this tree of Abolitionism is evil, and only evil—root and branch, flower, and leaf, and fruit; that it springs from, and is nourished by, an utter rejection of the Scriptures; that it produces no real benefit to the enslaved, and is the fruitful source of division and strife, and infidelity, in both Church and State. I have four distinct propositions on the subject to maintain—four theses to nail up over this pulpit, and defend with "the word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit."

I.—Abolitionism has no foundation in the Scriptures.

II.—Its principles have been promulgated chiefly by misrepresentation and abuse.

III.—It leads, in multitudes of cases, and by a logical process, to utter infidelity.

IV.—It is the chief cause of the strife that agitates, and the danger that threatens, our country.

I.—ABOLITIONISM HAS NO FOUNDATION IN SCRIPTURE.

Passing by the records of the patriarchal age, and waiving the question as to those servants in Abraham's family who, in the simple but expressive language of Scripture, "were bought with

his money," let us come at once to the tribunal of that law which God promulgated amid the solemnities of Sinai. What said the law and the testimony to that peculiar people over whom God ruled, and for whose institutions He has assumed the responsibility? The answer is in the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus, in these words:—

"And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor and be sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant; but as a hired servant and a sojourner he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee, and then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him."

So far, you will observe, the law refers to the children of Israel, who by reason of poverty were reduced to servitude. It was their right to be free at the year of jubilee, unless they chose to remain in perpetual bondage; for which ease provision is made in other and distinct enactments.* But not so with slaves of foreign birth. There was no year of jubilee provided for them.† For what says the law? Read the forty-fourth to forty-sixth verses of the same chapter.

"Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids which thou shalt have shall be of the heathen that are round about you. Of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you—of them shall ye buy and of their families that are with you, which they beget in your land; and they shall be your *possession*. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to *inherit them as a possession;* they shall be *your bondmen forever*."

There it is, plainly written in the Divine law. No legislative enactment, no statute framed by legal skill, was ever more explicit

* Exodus xxi, 5, 6: "And if the servant (*i. e.*, the *Hebrew* servant, as the context shows) shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl: AND HE SHALL SERVE HIM FOREVER."

† The Abolitionists have blown this jubilee trumpet with a zeal worthy of a better cause. They have insisted that under the Levitical economy slaves could only be held for *fifty years*. Now, inasmuch as the average of human life is somewhere between thirty and forty years, some, at least, of these slaves, according to the interpretation of the Abolitionists themselves, must have ended their days in bondage. But the fact is, as any one may see by a candid reading of the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus, the year of jubilee had no reference to bondmen of foreign birth, but only to Hebrew landowners who were "waxen poor and fallen in decay."

and incapable of perversion. When the Abolitionist tells me that slaveholding is sin, in the simplicity of my faith in the Holy Scriptures, I point him to this sacred record, and tell him, in all candor, as my text does, that his teaching blasphemes the name of God and His doctrine. When he begins to dote about questions and strifes of words, appealing to the Declaration of Indedependence, and asserting that the idea of property in men is an enormity and a crime, I still hold him to the record, saying, "Ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession." When he waxes warm, as he always does if his opponent quote Scripture, (which is the great test to try the spirits whether they be of God—the very spear of Ithuriel to reveal their true character)—when he gets angry, and begins to pour out his evil surmisings and abuse upon slaveholders, I obey the precept which says, "from such withdraw thyself," comforting myself with this thought: that the wisdom of God is wiser than men, and the kindness of God kinder than men. Philosophers may reason, and reformers may rave till doomsday; they never can convince me that God, in the Levitical law, or in any other law, sanctioned sin; and as I know, from the plain passage I have quoted, and many more like it, that he did sanction slaveholding among his ancient people, I know, also, by the logic of that faith which believes the Bible to be His word, that slaveholding is not sin.

There are men, even among professing Christians, and not a few ministers of the gospel, who answer this argument from the Old Testament Scriptures, by a simple denial of their authority. They do not tell us how God could ever or anywhere countenance that which is morally wrong, but they content themselves with saying that the Levitical law is no rule of action for us; and they appeal from its decisions to what they consider the higher tribunal of the gospel.* Let us, therefore, join issue with them before the bar of

* Some years since, Dr. Wayland publicly asserted that *the New Testament is the only and sufficient rule of faith for Christians.* The editors of the New-York *Observer* challenged this statement; and, as I have been informed, the late Dr. James Alexander offered to debate the question in the columns of that journal. Dr. Wayland prudently declined the discussion, promising, however, that he would, at a convenient season, explain and defend his views. The promised explanation has not yet appeared.

the New Testament Scriptures. Here there is no lack of witnesses in the case. It is a historic truth, acknowledged on all hands, that at the advent of Jesus Christ slavery existed all over the civilized world, and was intimately interwoven with its social and civil institutions. In Judea, in Asia Minor, in Greece, in all the countries where the Saviour or his Apostles preached the gospel, slaveholding was just as common as it is to-day in South Carolina. It is not alleged by any one, or, at least, by any one having any pretensions to scholarship or candor, that the Roman laws regulating slavery were even as mild as the very worst statutes which have been passed upon the subject in modern times. It will not be denied by any honest and well-informed man, that modern civilization and the restraining influences of the gospel have shed ameliorating influences upon the relation between master and slave, which were utterly unknown at the advent of Christianity. And how did Jesus and his Apostles treat this subject? Masters and slaves met them at every step in their missionary work, and were present in every audience to which they preached. The Roman law, which gave the full power of life and death into the master's hand, was familiar to them; and all the evils connected with the system surrounded them every day, as obviously as the light of heaven. And yet, it is a remarkable fact, which the Abolitionist does not, because he can not deny, that the New Testament is utterly silent in regard to the alleged sinfulness of slaveholding. In all the instructions of the Saviour; in all the reported sermons of the inspired Apostles; in all the epistles they were moved by the Holy Spirit to write, for the instruction of coming generations—there is not one distinct and explicit denunciation of slaveholding, nor one precept requiring the master to emancipate his slaves. Every acknowledged sin is openly and repeatedly condemned, and in unmeasured terms. Drunkenness and adultery, theft and murder—all the moral wrongs which ever have been known to afflict society, are forbidden by name; and yet, according to the teaching of Abolitionism, this greatest of all sins—this sum of all villainies—is never spoken of except in respectful terms. How can this be accounted for?

Let Dr. Wayland, whose work on moral science is taught in many of our schools, answer this question; and let parents whose children are studying that book, diligently consider his answer. I quote from Wayland's Moral Science, page 213 :—

"The gospel was designed not for one race or for one time, but for all races and for all times. It looked not to the abolition of slavery for that age alone, but for its universal abolition. Hence, the important object of its Author was to gain for it a lodgment in every part of the known world, so that, by its universal diffusion among all classes of society, it might, quietly and peacefully, modify and subdue the evil passions of men. In this manner alone could its object—a universal moral revolution—have been accomplished. For if it had forbidden the evil, instead of subverting the principle; if it had proclaimed the unlawfulness of slavery, and taught slaves to resist the oppression of their masters, it would instantly have arrayed the two parties in deadly hostility throughout the civilized world; its announcement would have been the signal of servile war, and the very name of the Christian religion would have been forgotten amidst the agitation of universal bloodshed. The fact, under these circumstances, that the gospel *does not forbid slavery*, affords no reason to suppose that it does not mean to prohibit it."

We pause not now to comment upon the admitted fact *that the gospel does not forbid slavery*, and that Jesus Christ and his Apostles pursued a course entirely different from that adopted by the Abolitionists, including the learned author himself; nor to inquire whether the teaching of Abolitionism is not as likely to produce strife and bloodshed in these days as in the first ages of the church. What we now call attention to, and protest against, is the imputation here cast upon Christ and his Apostles. Do you believe the Saviour sought to insinuate his religion into the earth by concealing its real design, and preserving a profound silence in regard to one of the very worst sins it came to destroy? Do you believe that when he healed the centurion's servant, (whom every honest commentator admits to have been a slave,*) and pronounced that

* We know the centurion's servant was a *slave*, not only from the position and nationality of the master, but from the very name given in the original to the servant. "*Doulos*" is derived from the verb *deo*, to *bind*, and always signifies a *bondman*.

Dr. Robinson, whose Lexicon is the great standard upon such questions, says: "The *doulos* was never a *hired* servant, the latter being called by another name—*misthios*, or *misthotos*." This testimony is confirmed by every authority, ancient and modern, European and American, except a little clique of Abolitionists, who, to sustain their dogma, would not only wrest the Scriptures, but overturn the very foundations of the Greek language.

precious eulogy upon the master, "I have not seen so great faith in Israel"—do you believe that Jesus suffered that man to live on in sin because he deprecated the consequences of preaching Abolitionism? When Paul stood upon Mars' Hill, surrounded by ten thousand times as many slaveholders as there were idols in the city, do you believe he kept back any part of the requirements of the gospel because he was afraid of a tumult among the people? We ask these Abolition philosophers whether, as a matter of fact, idolatry, and the vices connected with it, were not even more intimately interwoven with the social and civil life of the Roman empire than slavery was? Did the Apostles abstain from preaching against idolatry? Nay, who does not know that by denouncing this sin they brought down upon themselves the whole power of the Roman empire? Nero covered the Christian martyrs with pitch, and lighted up the city with their burning bodies, just because they would not withhold or compromise the truth in regard to the worship of idols. In the light of that fierce persecution it is a profane trifling for Dr. Wayland, or any other man, to tell us that Jesus or Paul held back their honest opinions of slavery in order to avoid "a servile war, in which the very name of the Christian religion would have been forgotten." The name of the Christian religion is not so easily forgotten; nor are God's great purposes of redemption capable of being defeated by an honest declaration of His truth everywhere and at all times. And yet this philosophy, so dishonoring to Christ and his Apostles, is moulding the character of our young men and women. It comes into our schools, and mingles with the very life-blood of future generations the sentiment that Christ and his Apostles held back the truth, and suffered sin to go unrebuked to avoid the wrath of man. And all this to maintain, at all hazards, and in the face of the Saviour's example to the contrary, the unscriptural dogma that slaveholding is sin.

But it must be observed, in this connection, that the Apostles went much further than to abstain from preaching against slaveholding. *They admitted slaveholders to the communion of the church.* In our text, masters are acknowledged as "brethren, faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit." If the New Testament is to be received as a faithful history, no man was ever rejected by the

apostolic church upon the ground that he owned slaves. If he abused his power as a master, if he availed himself of the authority conferred by the Roman law to commit adultery, or murder, or cruelty, he was rejected for these crimes, just as he would be rejected now for similar crimes from any Christian church in our Southern States.*

If parents abused or neglected their children they were censured, not for having children, but for not treating them properly. And so with the slaveholder. It was not the owning of slaves, but the manner in which he fulfilled the duties of his station, that made him a subject for church discipline. The mere fact that he was a slaveholder no more subjected him to censure than the mere fact that he was a father or a husband. It is, obviously, upon the recognized lawfulness of the relation that all the precepts regulating the reciprocal duties of that relation are based.

These precepts are scattered all through the inspired epistles. There is not one command or exhortation to emancipate the slave. The Apostle well knew that for the present emancipation would be no real blessing to him. But the master is exhorted to be kind and considerate, and the slave to be obedient, that so they might preserve the unity of that church in which there is no distinction between Greek or Jew, male or female, bond or free. Oh, if ministers of the gospel in this land and age had but followed Paul as he followed Christ, and, instead of hurling anathemas and exciting wrath against slaveholders, had sought only to bring both master and slave to the fountain of Emanuel's blood; if the agencies of the blessed gospel had only been suffered to work their way quietly, as the light and dew of the morning, into the structure of society, both North and South—how different would have been the position of our country this day before God! How dif-

* One of the grossest sins of Abolitionism, and one chief root of the bitterness that has sprung up between the North and the South, is its persistent slander on this subject. For example, some years ago it was asserted, and reiterated by Abolition journals and lecturers, that a minister at the South, without injury to his character, had tied up his slave on Sabbath morning, and, having inflicted a cruel punishment, left him suspended, while he went to church to preach and administer the Lord's supper, and then returned to inflict additional stripes upon his lacerated victim. This is but a specimen. In regard to crimes against chastity, the Southern churches have been shamefully slandered. What wonder that Christian mothers, and even ministers of the gospel, are roused to a revolutionary indignation by such abuse?

ferent would have been the privileges enjoyed by the poor black man's soul, which, in this bitter contest, has been too much neglected and despised. Then there would have been no need to have converted our churches into military barracks for collecting fire-arms to carry on war upon a distant frontier. No need for a sovereign State to execute the fearful penalty of the law upon the invader for doing no more than honestly to carry out the teaching of Abolition preachers, who bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, while they touch them not with one of their fingers. No need for the widow and the orphan to weep in anguish of heart over those cold graves, for whose dishonor and desolation God will hold the real authors responsible. No occasion or pretext for slaveholding States to pass such stringent laws for the punishment of the secret incendiary and the prevention of servile war.

I shall not attempt to show what will be the condition of the African race in this country when the gospel shall have brought all classes under its complete dominion. What civil and social relations men will sustain in the times of millennial glory, I do not know. I cordially incline to the current opinion of our church that slavery is permitted and regulated by the Divine law, under both the Jewish and Christian dispensations, not as the final destiny of the enslaved, but as an important and necessary process in their transition from heathenism to Christianity—a wheel in the great machinery of Providence, by which the final redemption is to be accomplished. However this may be, one thing I know, and every Abolitionist might know, if he would, that there are Christian families at the South in which a patriarchal fidelity and affection subsist between the bond and the free, and where slaves are better fed and clothed and instructed, and have a better opportunity for salvation, than the majority of laboring people in the city of New-York. If the tongue of Abolitionism had only kept silence these twenty years past, the number of such families would be tenfold as great. Fanaticism at the North is one chief stumbling-block in the way of the gospel at the South. This is one great grievance that presses to-day upon the hearts of our Christian brethren in the Southern States. This, in a measure, explains why such

men as Dr. Thornwell, of South Carolina, and Dr. Palmer,* of New Orleans—men whose genius and learning and piety would adorn any state or station—are willing to secede from the Union. They feel that the influence of the Christian ministry is hindered, and their power to do good to both master and slave crippled, by the constant agitations of Abolitionism in our national councils, and the incessant turmoil excited by the unscriptural dogma that slaveholding is sin. They hope that under some other government they may have that peace for the prosecution of their Master's work, which the constitution of the United States has hitherto failed to secure for them. Whatever I may think of secession as a remedy for the evils complained of, in my heart I do not blame them. My soul is knit to such men with the sympathy of Jonathan for David. Whatever be the result of this contest, the union between their hearts and mine, cemented by the word and Spirit of God, can never be dissolved. Earth and hell cannot dissolve it. Though my lot is cast in a colder clime, yet in the outgoings of that warm affection to which space is nothing, I will ever say, "Entreat me not to leave thee, for your people shall be my people,

---

* Since the delivery of my sermon, I have received a copy of Dr. Palmer's eloquent Thanksgiving discourse, from which I make the following extract:—

"The worst foes of the black race are those who have intermeddled on their behalf. We know better than others, that every attribute of their character fits them for dependence and servitude. By nature the most affectionate and loyal of all races beneath the sun, they are also the most helpless; and no calamity can befall them greater than the loss of that protection they enjoy under this patriarchal system. Indeed the experiment has been grandly tried of precipitating them upon freedom which they know not how to enjoy; and the dismal results are before us in statistics that astonish the world. With the fairest portions of the earth in their possession, and with the advantage of a long discipline as cultivators of the soil, their constitutional indolence has converted the most beautiful islands of the sea into a howling waste. It is not too much to say that if the South should, at this moment, surrender every slave, the wisdom of the entire world, united in solemn council, could not solve the question of their disposal. Their transportation to Africa, even if it were feasible, would be but the most refined cruelty; they must perish with starvation before they could have time to relapse into their primitive barbarism. Their residence here, in the presence of the vigorous Saxon race, would be but the signal for their rapid extermination before they had time to waste away through listlessness, filth and vice. Freedom would be their doom; and equally from both they call upon us, their providential guardians, to be protected. I know this argument will be scoffed abroad as the hypocritical cover thrown over our own cupidity and selfishness; but every Southern master knows its truth and feels its power. My servant, whether born in my house or bought with my money, stands to me in the relation of a child. Though providentially owing me service, which, providentially, I am bound to exact, he is, nevertheless, my brother and my friend; and I am to him a guardian and a father. He leans upon me for protection, for counsel, and for blessing; and so long as the relation continues, no power but the power of almighty God, shall come between him and me. Were there no argument but this, it binds upon us the providential duty of preserving the relation that we may save him from a doom worse than death."

and your God my God;" and though we may be separated in body for a while by the dark gulf of political disunion, and by the absorbing strife for which every sound man at the North will soon be called upon to gird himself—the long, long rest of eternity, will afford abundant opportunity for the interchange of our mutual charities.

II.—THE PRINCIPLES OF ABOLITION HAVE BEEN PROPAGATED CHIEFLY BY MISREPRESENTATION AND ABUSE.

Having no foundation in Scripture, it does not carry on its warfare by Scripture weapons. Its prevailing spirit is fierce and proud, and its language is full of wrath and bitterness. Let me prove this by testimony from its own lips. I quote Dr. Channing, of Boston, whose name is a tower of strength to the Abolition cause, and whose memory is their continual boast. In a work published in the year 1836, I find the following words:—

"The Abolitionists have done wrong, I believe; nor is their wrong to be winked at because done fanatically or with good intentions; for how much mischief may be wrought with good designs! They have fallen into the common error of enthusiasts, that of exaggerating their object, of feeling as if no evil existed but that which they opposed, and as if no guilt could be compared with that of countenancing and upholding it. The tone of their newspapers, so far as I have seen them, has often been fierce, bitter and abusive. They have sent forth their orators, some of them transported with fiery zeal, to sound the alarm against slavery through the land, to gather together young and old, pupils from schools, females hardly arrived at years of discretion, the ignorant, the excitable, the impetuous, and to organize these into associations for the battle against oppression. Very unhappily, they preached their doctrine to the colored people, and collected them into societies. To this mixed and excitable multitude, minute, heart-rending descriptions of slavery were given in piercing tones of passion; and slaveholders were held up as monsters of cruelty and crime. The Abolitionist, indeed, proposed to convert slaveholders; and for this end he approached them with vituperation, and exhausted on them the vocabulary of abuse. And he has reaped as he sowed."

Such is the testimony of Dr. Channing, given in the year 1836. What would he have thought and said if he had lived until the year 1860, and seen this little stream, over whose infant violence he lamented, swelling into a torrent and flooding the land?

Abolitionism is abusive in its persistent misrepresentation of the

legal principles involved in the relation between master and slave. Its teachers reiterate, in a thousand exciting forms, the assertion that the idea of property in man blots out his manhood and degrades him to the level of a brute or a stone. "Domestic slavery," says Dr. Wayland, in his work on Moral Science, "supposes, at best, that the relation between master and slave is not that which exists between man and man, but is a modification, at least, of that which exists between man and the brutes." Do not these Abolitionist philosophers know, that, according to the laws of every civilized country on earth, a man has property in his children, and a woman has property in her husband? The statutes of the State of New-York, and of every other Northern State, recognize and protect this property, and our courts of justice have repeatedly assessed its value. If a man is killed on a railroad, his wife may bring suit and recover damages for the pecuniary loss she has suffered. If one man entice away the daughter of another, and marry her, while she is still under age, the father may bring a civil suit for damages for the loss of that child's services, and the pecuniary compensation is the only redress the law provides.* Thus the common law of Christendom, and the statutes of our own State, recognize property in man. In what does that property consist? Simply *in such services as a man or a child may properly be required to render.* This is all that the Levitical law, or any other law, means when it says, "Your bondmen shall be your possession, or property, and an inheritance for your children." The property consists, not in the right to treat the slave like a brute, but simply in a legal claim for such services as a man in that position may properly be required to render.† And yet Abolition-

* If the law went further, as it ought to, and punished the minister who performs the marriage ceremony, the offence would not be so often repeated in this community.

† With a manifest design to prejudice the student against the idea of property in man, Dr. Wayland adopts a marvelous "Definition of the right of Property." Let Christian parents and teachers look at it. "The abstract right of property is the right to *use something in such manner as I choose.* But, inasmuch as this right of use is common to all men, and as one may choose to use his property in such a way as to deprive his neighbor of this or of some other right, the right to use as I choose is limited by the restriction that I do not interfere with the rights of my neighbor. The right of property, therefore, when thus restricted, is the right to *use something as I choose, provided I do not so use it as to interfere with the rights of my neighbor.*"—Page 229. Is that *so*, Dr. Wayland? Has a man a right, if *he chooses*, to take his horse into the woods, where his neighbors will not be disturbed by his cruelty, and there torture or

ists, in the face of the Divine law, persist in denouncing the very relation between master and slave "as a modification, at least, of that which exists between man and the brutes."

This, however, is not the worst or most prevalent form which their abusive spirit assumes. Their mode of arguing the question of slaveholding, by a pretended appeal to facts, is a tissue of misrepresentation from beginning to end. Let me illustrate my meaning by a parallel case. Suppose I undertake to prove the wickedness of marriage, as it exists in the city of New-York. In this discussion suppose the Bible is excluded, or, at least, that it is not recognized as having exclusive jurisdiction in the decision of the question. My first appeal is to the statute law of the State.

I show there enactments which nullify the law of God, and make divorce a marketable and cheap commodity. I collect the advertisements of your daily papers, in which lawyers offer to procure the legal separation of man and wife for a stipulated price, to say nothing, in this sacred place, of other advertisements which decency forbids me to quote. Then I turn to the records of our criminal courts, and find that every day some cruel husband beats his wife, or some unnatural parent murders his child, or some discontented wife or husband seeks the dissolution of the marriage bond. In the next place, I turn to the orphan asylums and hospitals, and show there the miserable wrecks of domestic tyranny in wives deserted and children maimed by drunken parents.* In the last place, I go through our streets, and into our tenement houses, and count the thousands of ragged children, who, amid ignorance and filth, are training for the prison and gallows.

Summing all these facts together, I put them forth as the fruits of marriage in the city of New-York, and a proof that the relation

---

warm the poor beast? Does the master's claim to property in his servant involve a claim to use that servant just as *he chooses*, with no other restriction than the one you mention? No sir, the abstract right of property, is the right to use *some thing or person* according to the nature of that thing or person, and under all the restrictions which the Divine law imposes, which restrictions go much further than my neighbor's rights. This is Christian philosophy. Your definition would come with better grace from a heathen.

* There is in the Brooklyn Orphan Asylum a little child who was thrown into the fire and almost roasted to death by its father. If that child had been a slave in Charleston, how the sad story would have rung through the land! But modern philanthropy has no tears or shrieks to spare for *white children*.

itself is sinful. If I were a novelist and had written a book to illustrate this same doctrine, I would call this array of facts a "Key." In this key I say nothing about the sweet charities and affections that flourish in ten thousand homes, not a word about the multitude of loving-kindnesses that characterize the daily life of honest people, about the instruction and discipline that are training children at ten thousand firesides for usefulness here and glory hereafter;—all this I ignore, and quote only the statute book, the newspapers, the records of criminal courts, and the miseries of the abodes of poverty. Now, what have I done? I have not misstated or exaggerated a single fact. And yet am I not a falsifier and a slanderer of the deepest dye? Is there a virtuous woman or an honest man in this city whose cheeks would not burn with indignation at my one-sided and injurious statements? But this is just what Abolitionism has done in regard to slaveholding. It has undertaken to illustrate its cardinal doctrine in works of fiction: and then, to sustain the creation of its fancy, has attempted to underpin it with an accumulation of facts. These facts are collected in precisely the way I have described. The statute books of slaveholding States are searched, and every wrong enactment collated, newspaper reports of cruelty and crime on the part of wicked masters are treasured up and classified, all the outrages that have been perpetrated "by lewd fellows of the baser sort"—of whom there are plenty, both North and South—are eagerly seized and recorded: and this mass of vileness and filth, collected from the kennels and sewers of society, is put forth as a faithful exhibition of slaveholding. Senators in the forum, and ministers in the pulpit, distill this raw material into the more refined slander "that Southern society is essentially barbarous, and that slaveholding had its origin in hell." Legislative bodies enact and re-enact statutes which declare that slaveholding is such an enormous crime that if a Southern man, under the broad shield of the constitution, and with the decisions of the Supreme Court of the country in his hand, shall come within their jurisdiction, and set up a claim to a fugitive slave, he shall be punished with a fine of $2,000 and fifteen years' imprisonment. And this method of argument has continued until multitudes of honest Christian people

in this and other lands believe that slaveholding is the sin of sins, the sum of all villainies. Let me illustrate this by an incident in my own experience. A few years since I took from the centre-table of a Christian family in Scotland, by whom I had been most kindly entertained, a book entitled "Life and Manners in America." On the blank leaf was an inscription, stating that the book had been bestowed upon one of the children of the family, as a reward of diligence in an institution of learning. The frontispiece was a picture of a man of fierce countenance beating a naked woman. The contents of the book were professedly compiled from the testimony of Americans upon the subject of slavery. I dare not quote in this place the extracts which I made in my memorandum. It will be sufficient to say that the book asserts, as undoubted facts, that the banks of the Mississippi are studded with iron gallows for the punishment of slaves—that in the city of Charleston the bloody block on which masters cut off the hands of disobedient servants may be seen in the public squares, and that sins against chastity are common and unrebuked in professedly Christian families.

Now in my heart I did not feel angry at the author of that book, nor at the school-teacher who bestowed it upon his scholar; for in Christian charity I gave them credit for honesty in the case. But standing there a stranger among the martyr memories of that glorious land, to which my heart had so often made its pilgrimage, I did feel that you and I, and every man in America, was wronged by the revilers of their native land, who teach foreigners that hanging, and cutting off hands, and beating women, are the characteristics of our life and manners.

But we need not go to foreign lands for proof that Abolitionism has carried on its warfare by the language of abuse. The annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society brings the evidence to our doors. We have been accustomed to laugh at these vernal exhibitions of fanaticism, not thinking, perhaps, that what was fun for us was working death to our brethren whose property and reputation we are bound to protect. The fact is, we have suffered a fire to be built in our midst, whose sparks have been scattered far and wide; and now when the smoke of the conflagration comes

back to blind our eyes, and the heat of it begins to scorch our industrial and commercial interests, it will not do for us to say that the utterances of that Society are the ravings of a fanatical and insignificant few; for the men who compose it are honored in our midst with titles and offices. Its President is a Chief Justice of the State of New Jersey. The ministers who have thrown over its doings the sanction of our holy religion are quoted and magnified all over the land as the representative men of the age: and the man who stood up in its deliberations in the year 1852, and exhausted the vocabulary of abuse upon the compromise measures, and the great statesmen who framed them, is now a judge in our courts and the guardian of our lives and our property.

It will, doubtless, be said that misrepresentation and abuse have not been confined, in the progress of this unhappy contest, to the Abolitionists of the North; that demagogues and self-seeking men at the South have been violent and abusive, and that newspapers professedly in the interests of the South, with a spirit which can be characterized as little less than diabolical, have circulated every scandal in the most aggravated and irritating form. But suppose all this to be granted—what then? Can Christian men justify or palliate the wrath and evil-speaking which are at their own doors by pointing to the retaliation which it has provoked from their neighbors? If I were preaching to-day to a Southern audience, it would be my duty, and I trust God would give me grace to perform it, to tell them of their sins in this matter. And especially would it be my privilege, as a minister of the gospel of peace—a privilege from which no false views of manhood should prevent me—to exhort and beseech them as brethren. I would assure them that there are multitudes here who still cherish the memory of the battle-fields and council chambers where our fathers cemented this Union of States, and who will stand by the compact of that constitution to the utmost extremity. I would tell the thousands of Christian ministers, among whom are some of the brightest ornaments of the American pulpit, and the tens of thousands of Christian men and women, toward whom, while the love of Christ burns in me, my heart never can grow cold, that if they will

only be patient, and hope to the end, all wrongs may yet be righted. Therefore, I would beseech them not to put a great gulf between us, and cut off the very opportunity for reconciliation upon an honorable basis, by a revolution whose end no human eye can see. But, then, I am not preaching at the South. I stand here, at one of the main fountain-heads of the abuse we have complained of.

I stand here to rebuke this sin, and exhort the guilty parties to repent and forsake it. It is magnanimous and Christlike for those from whom the first provocation came, to make the first concessions.

The legislative enactments which are in open and acknowledged violation of the constitution, and whose chief design is to put a stigma upon slaveholding, must and will be repealed. Truth and justice will ultimately prevail; and God's blessing, and the blessings of generations yet unborn, will rest upon that party, in this unhappy contest, who first stand forth to utter the language of conciliation, and proffer the olive-branch of peace. The great fear is, that the reaction will come too late; *but sooner or later it will come.* Abolitionism ought to, and one day will, change the mode of its warfare, and adopt a new vocabulary. I believe in the liberty of the press, and in freedom of speech; but I do not believe that any man has the right, before God, or in the eye of civilized law, to speak and publish what he pleases without regard to the consequences. With the conscientious convictions of our fellow-citizens, neither we, nor the law, have any right to interfere; but the law ought to protect all men from the utterance of libelous words, whose only effect is to create division and strife.

I trust and pray, and call upon you to unite with me in the supplication, that God would give Abolitionists repentance and a better mind, so that in time to come they may, at least, propagate their principles in decent and respectful language.

III.—ABOLITIONISM LEADS, IN MULTITUDES OF CASES, AND BY A LOGICAL PROCESS, TO UTTER INFIDELITY.

On this point I would not, and will not, be misunderstood. I do not say that Abolitionism is infidelity. I speak only of the tendencies of the system, as indicated in its avowed principles and demonstrated in its practical fruits.

One of its avowed principles is, that it does not try slavery by the Bible; but as one of its leading advocates has recently declared, it tries the Bible by the principles of freedom. It insists that the word of God must be made to support certain human opinions, or forfeit all claims upon our faith. That I may not be suspected of exaggeration on this point, let me quote, from the recent work of Mr. Barnes, a passage which may well arrest the attention of all thinking men:—

"There are great principles in our nature, as God has made us, which can never be set aside by any authority of a professed revelation. If a book claiming to be a revelation from God, by any fair interpretation, defended slavery, or placed it on the same basis as the relation of husband and wife, parent and child, guardian and ward, such a book would not, and could not, be received by the mass of mankind as a Divine revelation."—*Barnes on Slavery and the Church*, p. 193.

This assumption, that men are capable of judging beforehand what is to be expected in a Divine revelation, is the cockatrice's egg, from which, in all ages, heresies have been hatched. This is the spider's web which men have spun out of their own brains, and clinging to which, they have attempted to swing over the yawning abyss of infidelity.* Alas, how many have fallen in, and been dashed to pieces! When a man sets up the great principles of our nature (by which he always means his own preconceived opinions) as the supreme tribunal before which even the law of

* It is not denied that man, as originally constituted by his Creator, was capable of discerning for himself between good and evil. Even since the fall, the law of God is still written in the heart, (Rom. ii, 3.,) and would be a sufficient guide, if there were nothing to blot and pervert it. But what says the Apostle in regard to the whole world who have not the Scriptures? "They have become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart is darkened," &c., (Rom. i, 21–25.) What are the *principles* by which, according to Mr. Barnes' theory, these men are to try "the authority of a supposed revelation?" Their principles teach them that human sacrifices, and all kinds of uncleanness, are right. Must a supposed revelation conform to these principles in order to secure their acceptance of it?

Mr. Barnes well knows that in Christian lands the ablest and best men differ as to what are the principles of our nature. Who will assume to be the oracle on this subject? The Abolitionist will declare that *hostility to slavery upon moral grounds*, is one of these principles. But the great mass of mankind, including just as wise and good men as he is, do not admit any such principle, and are not willing that he should be dictator in morals. Besides, this whole appeal to natural principles presents a false and deceitful issue. The Bible is *admitted* to be a Divine revelation. The simple question is, what does the Bible teach? Mr. Barnes, while professedly expounding the Scriptures, finds certain texts, which, by every fair construction of words, seem to put God's sanction on slaveholding. From these texts he desires to extort a different meaning; to justify which procedure, he appeals to the principles of our (*i. e.*, *his*) nature.

God must be tried—when a man says "the Bible must teach Abolitionism, or I will not receive it," he has already cut loose from the sheet-anchor of faith. True belief says, "Speak, Lord, thy servant waits to hear." Abolitionism says, "Speak, Lord, but speak in accordance with the principles of human nature, or thy word cannot be received by the great mass of mankind as a Divine revelation." The fruit of such principles is just what we might expect. Wherever the seed of Abolitionism has been sown broadcast, a plentiful crop of infidelity has sprung up. In the communities where anti-slavery excitement has been most prevalent, the power of the gospel has invariably declined; and when the tide of fanaticism begins to subside, the wrecks of church order and of Christian character have been scattered on the shore. I mean no disrespect to New England—to the good men who there stand by the ancient landmarks, and contend earnestly for the truth—nor to the illustrious dead whose praise is in all the churches; but who does not know that the States in which Abolitionism has achieved its most signal triumphs are at the same time the great strongholds of infidelity in the land? I have often thought that if some of those old pilgrim fathers could come back, in the spirit and power of Elias, to attend a grand celebration at Plymouth rock, they might well preach on this text:—"If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." The effect of Abolitionism upon individuals is no less striking and mournful than its influence upon communities. It is a remarkable and instructive fact, and one at which Christian men would do well to pause and consider, that, in this country, all the prominent leaders of Abolitionism, outside of the ministry, have become avowed infidels; and that all our notorious Abolition preachers have renounced the great doctrines of grace as they are taught in the standards of the reformed churches—have resorted to the most violent processes of interpretation to avoid the obvious meaning of plain Scriptural texts, and ascribed to the Apostles of Christ principles from which piety and moral courage instinctively revolt. They make that to be sin which the Bible does not declare to be sin. They denounce, in language such as the sternest prophets of the Law never employed, a relation which

Jesus and his Apostles recognized and regulated. They seek to institute terms and tests of Christian communion utterly at variance with the organic law of the Church, as founded by its Divine Head; and, attempting to justify this usurpation of Divine prerogatives by an appeal from God's law to the dictates of fallen human nature, they would set up a spiritual tyranny more odious and insufferable, because more arbitrary and uncertain in its decisions, than Popery itself. And as the tree is, so have its fruits been. It is not a theory, but a demonstrated fact, that Abolitionism leads to infidelity. Such men as Garrison, and Giddings, and Gerrit Smith, have yielded to the current of their own principles, and thrown the Bible overboard. Thousands of humbler men who listen to Abolition preachers, will go and do likewise. And whether it be the restraints of official position, or the preventing grace of God, that enables such preachers to row up the stream and regard the authority of Scripture in other matters, their influence upon this one subject is all the more pernicious because they prophesy in the name of Christ. In this sincere and plain utterance of my deep convictions, I am only discharging my conscience toward the flock over which I am set. When the shepherd seeth the wolf coming, he is bound to give warning.

IV.—ABOLITIONISM IS THE CHIEF CAUSE OF THE STRIFE THAT AGITATES AND THE DANGER THAT THREATENS OUR COUNTRY.

Here, as upon the preceding point, I will not be misunderstood. I am not here as the advocate or opponent of any political party: and it is no more than simple justice for me to say plainly, that I do not consider Republican and Abolitionist as necessarily synonymous terms. There are tens of thousands of Christian men who voted with the successful party in the late election, who do not sympathize with the principles or aims of Abolitionism. Among these are some beloved members of my own flock, who will not hesitate a moment to put the seal of their approbation upon the doctrine of this discourse. And what is still more to the point, there seems to be sufficient evidence that the man who has just been chosen to be the head of this nation is among the more conservative and Bible-loving men of his party. We have no fears

that if the new administration could be quietly inaugurated, it would or could Abolitionize the government. There are honest people enough in the Northern States to prevent such a result. But, then, while this is admitted, as a simple matter of truth and justice, it cannot be denied, on the other hand, that Abolitionism did enter with all its characteristic bitterness into the recent contest; that the result never could have been accomplished without its assistance, and that it now appropriates the victory in words of ridicule and scorn that sting like a serpent. Let me give you, as a single specimen of the spirit in which Abolitionism has carried on its political warfare, an extract from a journal which claims to have a larger circulation than any other religious paper in the land. I quote from the New-York *Independent*, of September, 1856:—

"The people will not levy war nor inaugurate a revolution, even to relieve Kansas, until they have first tried what they can do by voting. If this peaceful remedy should fail to be applied this year then the people will count the cost wisely, and decide for themselves boldly and firmly, which is the better way, to rise in arms and throw off a government worse than that of old King George, or endure it another four years, and then vote again."

Such is the spirit—such the love to the constitution and Union of these States, with which this religious element has entered into and seeks to control our party politics.

This passage is not quoted as an extraordinary one for the columns of the Independent, for that paper is accustomed to breathe out threatenings and slaughter. It is but a fair illustration of the fierce spirit which this so-called *religious* journal infuses into the families where it is a weekly visitor, and of the opinions concerning the United States government it seeks to disseminate. The passage quoted has a special significance, however, in view of its date, *September*, 1856. The opinions of the Editors appear to have undergone a wonderful change in four years; and forgetting that they have been the violent advocates, not only of disunion but of civil war, they have become loud in rebuking secession at the South. The genius of the constitution might well say to such defenders, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth?"

But we deceive ourselves, if we suppose that our present dangers are of a birth so recent as 1856. As the questions now before the country rise in their magnitude above all party interests, and ought at once to blot out all party lines, so their origin is found far back of all party organizations as they now exist.

An article published twenty years ago in the Princeton *Review*, contains this remarkable language:—

"The opinion that slaveholding is itself a crime must operate to produce the disunion of the States and the division of all ecclesiastical societies in this country. Just so far as this opinion operates, it will lead those who entertain it to submit to any sacrifices to carry it out and give it effect. We shall become two nations in feeling, which must soon render us two nations in fact."

These words are wonderfully prophetic, and they who read the signs of the times must see that the period of their fulfillment draws near. In regard to ecclesiastical societies, the division foretold is already in a great measure accomplished. Three of our great religious denominations have been rent in twain by the simple question, "Is slaveholding a sin?"

It yet remains to be seen whether the American Tract Society and the American Board of Foreign Missions will be revolutionized and dismembered by a contest which, we are told, is to be annually renewed. In regard to the Union of these States, there is too much reason to fear that "we are already two nations in feeling," and to anticipate the near approach of the calamity which shall blot out some of the stars in our ensign, and make us two nations in fact.

And what has brought us to the verge of this precipice? What evil spirit has put enmity between the seed of those whom God, by his blessing on the wisdom and sacrifices of our fathers, made one flesh? What has created and fostered this alienation between the North and the South, until disunion—that used to be whispered in corners—stalks forth in open daylight, and is recognized as a necessity by multitudes of thinking men in all sections of the land? I believe before God, that this division of feeling, of which actual disunion will be but the expression and embodiment, was begotten of Abolitionism, has been rocked in its cradle and fed with its poisoned milk, and instructed by its ministers, until

girded with a strength which comes not altogether of this upper world, it is taking hold upon the pillars of the constitution, and shattering the noble fabric to its base.

There was a time when the constitutional questions between the North and South—the conflict of material interests growing out of their differences in soil and production—were discussed in the spirit of statesmanship and Christian courtesy. Then such men as Daniel Webster on the one side, and Calhoun on the other, stood up face to face and defended the rights of their respective constituency in words which will be quoted as long as the English tongue shall endure, as a model of eloquence and a pattern of manly debate. But Abolitionism began to creep in. It came first as a purely *moral* question. But very soon its doctrines were embraced by a sufficient number to hold the balance of power between contending parties in many districts and States. Aspirants for the Presidency seized upon it as a weapon for gratifying their ambition or avenging their disappointments. Under the shadow of their patronage, sincere Abolitionists became more bold and abusive in advocating their principles. The unlawful and wicked business of enticing slaves from their masters was pushed forward with increasing zeal. Men who, in the better days of the republic, could not have obtained the smallest office, were elected to Congress upon this single issue; and ministers of the gospel descended from the pulpit to mingle religious animosity with the boiling caldron of political strife. Nor was this process confined to one side in the contest. Abuse always provokes recrimination. So long as human nature is passionate, hard words will be responded to by harder blows. And now behold the result! In the halls where Webster and Calhoun, Adams and McDuffie rendered the very name of American statesmanship illustrious, and revived the memory of classic eloquence, we have heard the outpouring of both Northern and Southern violence from men who must be nameless in this sacred place; and in the land where such slaveholders as Washington and Madison united with Hamilton and Hancock in cementing the Union which they fondly hoped would be perpetual, commerce and manufactures, and all our great industrial and governmental interests, are trembling on the verge of disso-

lution. And as Abolitionism is the great mischief-maker between the North and South, so it is the great stumbling-block in the way of a peaceful settlement of our difficulties. Its voice is still for war. The spirit of conciliation and compromise it utterly abhors; and, mingling a horrid mirth with its madness, puts into the hands of the advocates of secession the very fans with which to blow the embers of strife into a flame. One man threw a torch into the great temple of the Ephesians and kindled a conflagration which a hundred thousand brave men could not extinguish. One man fiddled and sang, and made his courtiers laugh amid the burning of Rome—and the Abolition preacher "feels good" and overflows with merriment, when he sees our merchants and laboring men running after their chests and the bread of their families, "as if all creation was after them," and snuffs on the Southern breeze the scent of servile and civil war. Oh, shame—shame that it should come to this, and the name of our holy religion be so blasphemed! Let us hope, in Christian charity, that such men do not comprehend the danger that stares them in the face. Indeed, who of us does fully comprehend it? In the eloquent words of Daniel Webster, "While the Union lasts, we have high, exciting, gratifying prospects spread out before us—for us and for our children. Beyond that I seek not to penetrate the veil. God grant that in my day, at least, that curtain may not rise." I repeat the noble sentiment; God grant that in my day the curtain may not rise! Let the night of the grave envelop these eyes in its peaceful sleep, ere their balls are seared with the vision of dissolution and civil war. He must be blind who does not perceive that such a vision is just ready to burst upon us.

A kind and wonderful Providence has so tempered the body of these States together, so bound and interlaced them with commercial and social ties, to say nothing of legal obligations, that no member can be severed, and especially no contest can be waged among the members, without a quivering and anguish in every nerve, and a stagnation in the vital currents of all. Let one star be blotted out from our ensign, and the moral gravitation which holds all in their orbits will be paralyzed, if not utterly destroyed. The living example of successful secession for one cause, will sug-

gest the same course for another; and unless God gives our public men a wisdom and forbearance of which the past few years have afforded too little evidence, the dissolution of this Union will be the signal for the disintegration of its elements. In such a chaos, let us not flatter ourselves that we shall be in entire peace and safety. The contest, on whose perilous edge we seem to stand, cannot be merely sectional—all the North on the one side, and all the South on the other. It is a conflict that will run the ploughshare of division through every State and neighborhood in the land. Abolition orators may talk about what "we of the North" will do, and will not do, as though all the people had bowed down to worship the image they have set up; but other men besides them will claim the right to speak—other interests will need to be conserved besides the cause upon which they arrogantly assume that victory perches and the smile of Heaven rests. "Let not him who putteth on his armor boast as he that putteth it off."

When the thousands of working-men whose subsistence depends upon our trade with the South, many of whom have been deluded by Abolition demagogues, shall clamor in our streets for bread, free labor may present some problems which political economy has not solved. And when the commerce of this cosmopolitan city is paralyzed, and all her benevolent and industrial institutions are withering in the heat of this unnatural contest, it may become a question—nay, is it not already whispered in your counting-houses —whether this great metropolis can be separated from the people with whom her interests and her heart is bound up, and continue to be controlled by a legislative policy against which she is continually protesting; or whether, following the great lights of history, she will, at all hazards, set up for herself, and, unbolting the gateway of her magnificent harbor, invite the free trade of the world to pour its riches into her bosom. Such are a few of the problems which bring the question of a dissolution of the Union home to us. If we were sure of a peaceful solution, at whatever pecuniary or social sacrifice, we would not feel so deeply nor speak so earnestly. But who knows that it will be peaceful? Where is the surgeon who can sever even one member from this body

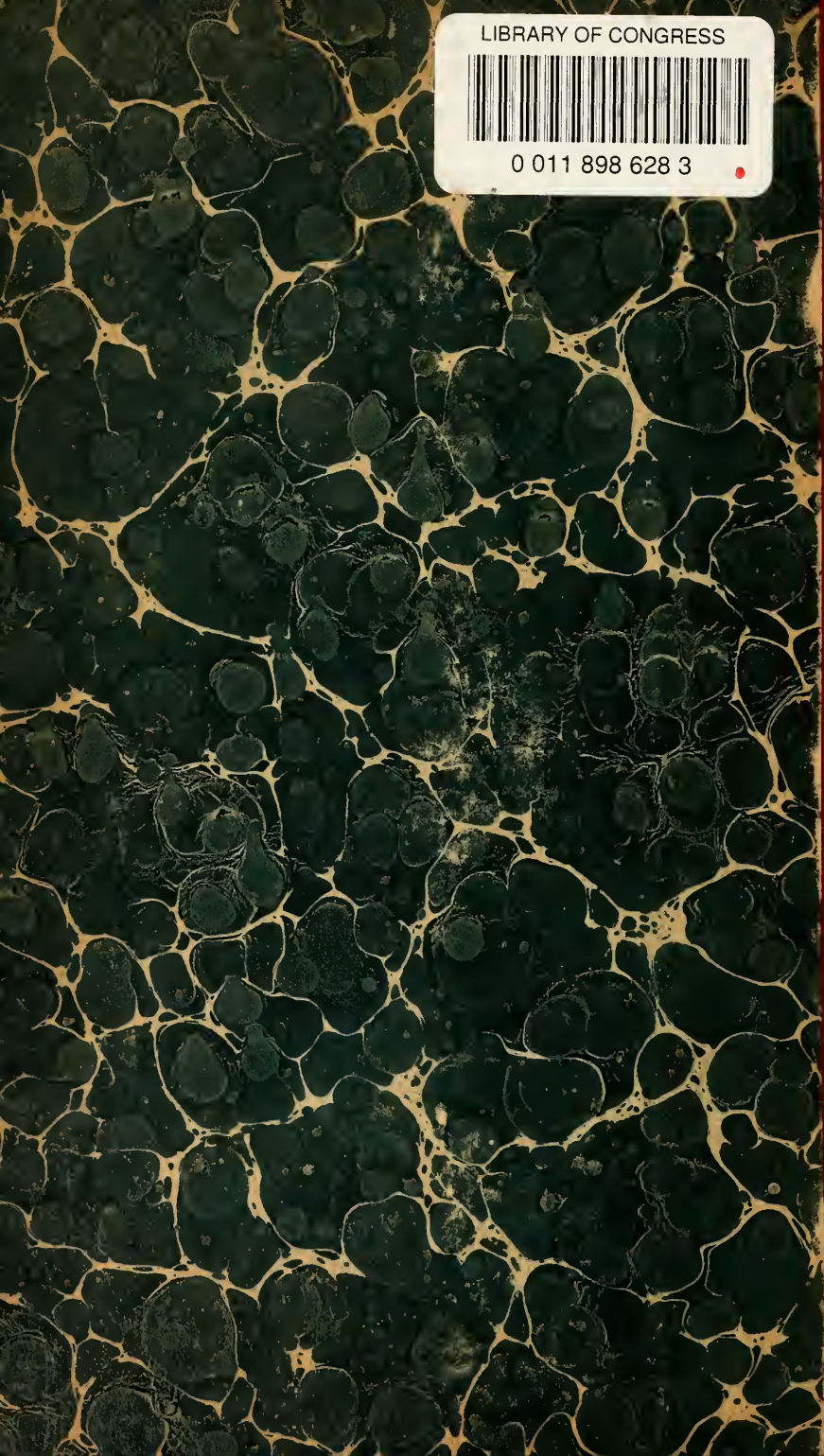
politic without the shedding of blood? Where is the statesman or political economist who will undertake to control the parties, or direct the industrial interests of any one State, amid the confusion and alarm of dissolution? Let us not deceive ourselves. The chasm before us is a yawning abyss, into whose depths no eye but God's can penetrate. Other men may cry, "Who's afraid?" and whistle to keep their courage up; but I confess my fears. Through the curtain that is about to rise, I see shadows at which the horror of a great darkness settles down upon my spirit, and the hair of my flesh stands up. Oh, my country! I have loved thee with an affection passing the love of woman! The glories of thy history, mingled with the life-blood of my childhood; thy prosperity has been the pride and boast of my riper years: and, mingling in my heart the love of country with the love of Christ, I have cherished the hope that thy brightness would never be diminished until it blended with the glories of the millennial day; that thy consummation would be like the setting of the morning star,

> "Which goes not down
> Behind the darkened west, nor hides obscured
> Among the tempests of the sky, but melts away
> Into the light of heaven."

And must this precious hope be dispelled? Must this light go out; and the brightest prospect the world ever beheld disappear amid confused noise, and garments rolled in blood? Must the interest of thirty millions of white men be sacrificed, and the sun of civilization be turned back upon the dial of the world's history, by a fanaticism which all experience proves to be the black man's bitterest enemy? Let us appeal to the God of peace, in whose hands are the hearts of all men, to dispel the fearful vision, to infuse His loving Spirit into our national councils, to give our public men the meekness of wisdom, and to bind the hearts of all the people once more in bonds of brotherly kindness.

But, if we would have these supplications answered, let us prove our faith by our works; take the beam out of our own eye, and obey the twofold precept of the text: "These things teach and exhort; and if any man teach otherwise, from such withdraw thyself."

Knowles.


LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 011 898 628 3